

In this Scripture we consider Peter's reference to Satan in **1 Peter 5:8-9**. As Christians, we have a great Savior who is "**able to save completely**" (**Hebrews 7:25**), but we also have a very powerful adversary whose name is Satan (**2 Corinthians 2:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:9**).

1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**sober-minded**" or in the Greek, "Nēpsate" meaning, "calm; circumspect; self-controlled"; "**adversary**" or "antidikos" meaning, "opponent; accuser"; "**devour**" or "katapiein" meaning, "destroy; consume."
- **Literal Interpretation:** Be self-controlled and vigilant always, for your opponent and accuser the devil is always about, prowling like a lion roaring to destroy and consume.

In **1 Peter 5:8** Peter refers to our great enemy and it is important that we understand who the Devil is and how he works. Peter warned that the enemy was on the warpath (**5:8-9**), but in **v. 10** he speaks of the grace of God, which would prove to be sufficient to make them strong, firm and steadfast. Who exactly is our great adversary?

- The Devil is a real person. Many think of Satan as a mythical monster, and therefore they speak of him lightly – but no Christian should ever do this. He is the great archenemy of God (**Acts 5:3**).
- The Devil is a powerful person. He is never still; he is mighty – but thank God he is not almighty!
- The Devil is an active person. He walks about and his schemes, maneuvers and strategies are diabolical. He is behind the drama of world events and he is active in the church and in the lives of men and women (**1 Timothy 5:15**).
- The Devil's activity is wholly evil. He is very subtle. Peter tells us that he sometimes reveals himself as "**a roaring lion**"; but he also reveals himself as an "**angel of light**" (**2 Corinthians 11:14**).

- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word. We must beware of the Devil, on our guard and stand up to and resist him (**James 4:7**) by:

1. THE DEVIL'S METHOD WITH THE UNSAVED.

Think of the multitudes who are without God and without hope in the world (**Ephesians 2:12**). Some of them are religious, respectable and even church-goers, and many have never even heard of the Lord; but in **Ephesians 2:1-3** we have a description of these people who are not Christians. The strategy and objective of the Devil, so far as the unsaved are concerned, can be summed up by three words: detention, darkness, destruction.

- Detention. Every unregenerate person is a captive of the Devil (**Ephesians 2:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:26**)
- Darkness. As the prince of darkness, Satan loves to keep souls in darkness (**2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:13**)
- Destruction. Satan is planning the everlasting destruction of human souls, and only those who trust in Christ are safe (**John 10:10**).

2. THE DEVIL'S METHOD WITH THE CHURCH AND GOD'S WORK.

The church is the only bulwark of righteousness in the world today, and consequently the Devil hates the church. His strategy, so far as the church is concerned, can be summed up by three words: division, diversion, disaffection.

- Division. The best illustration that Satan divides is the presence of denominationalism in the church. The Lord Jesus prayed that we might all be one (**John 17:20-22**), and when the Holy Spirit came there was a wonderful unity of heart and of soul (**Acts 2:1; 46; 4:32**). The Lord still desires this – read Psalm 133.
- Diversion. The Devil loves to get Christian people and churches absorbed with secondary and secular things; consequently, today many churches are worldly and most of their program is given up to activities which, though not wrong in themselves, are not channels through which the Holy Spirit can do His gracious work.
- Disaffection. One of the Devil's most subtle methods of seeking to upset the work of God is that of sowing seeds of discord amongst God's people, as we find illustrated in **Acts 6:1-2**. It is all too easy

for any Christian, almost unconsciously, to become the tool of the Devil, and we need to put on the whole armor of God (**Ephesians 6:10-13**)!

3. THE DEVIL'S METHOD WITH THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER.

The whole strategy of Satan in relation to the individual Christian may be summed up by three words: disturbance, disobedience, defeat.

- Disturbance. God's purpose is that every one of His children should experience perfect peace (**Isaiah 26:3**); peace of heart and mind (**Philippians 4:7**); and when such peace is the experience of His children their lives are characterized by poise, power and freedom from doubts and fear. But Satan loves to upset our peace, to disturb our poise and to rob us of power.
- Disobedience. He is the Great Tempter, and he wants to make us disobey the Lord and keep us half-hearted and undecided with regard to the will of God. Every time the Lord calls us to obey Him our adversary calls us to disobey Him, and thus we have to make the choice (**Joshua 24:15**).
- Defeat. As Christians we no longer belong to the Devil but to the Lord by redemption rights (**1 Corinthians 6:20**); but Satan still seeks our downfall. He cannot rob us of Heaven when we die, but he tries to rob us of the heavenly experience that God wants us to enjoy now (**Deuteronomy 11:18-21**). He cannot prevent us from reaching Heaven, but he can bring such defeat into our lives that we shall suffer loss (**1 Corinthians 3:11-15**).

These are the ways in which Satan gets to work. What must we, as Christians, do to prevent our being overcome by our great adversary? We must: (1) Keep Calm, as the words "**be self-controlled**" mean in **v. 8**; (2) Be Alert (**v. 8**) – we must be on our guard! (3) Resist the Devil (**v. 9**); we must give him no place (**Ephesians 4:27**); we must stand against him (**Ephesians 6:11**); (4) Believe – as **v. 9** tells us – '**standing firm in the faith**', and finally: (5) Remember – as **v. 9** says, "**because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.**" We must remember that other Christians are going through the same trials; but above all, we must remember that the God of all grace will enable us to overcome our great adversary (**v. 10**; **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**).

➤ **Conclusion:** When I sense evil, will I reject fear and turn to Christ?